

## CHAPTER 6

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INFORMATION PROGRAMA. GENERAL

1. This chapter provides guidance for information and public affairs officers (PAOs). It is to be used in conjunction with the DEERS Public Affairs Officers Kit, which contains sample articles, a speech, camera-ready material, and other information items. The objectives of the DEERS Information Program are as follows:

- a. To promulgate information on DEERS and to encourage positive acceptance and understanding of the program by all beneficiary audiences.
- b. To ensure the highest possible percentage of enrollment among all beneficiary groups.
- c. To facilitate the enrollment and eligibility checking processes at each successive site where DEERS is implemented.
- d. To provide the basis for a DEERS maintenance and update campaign after initial enrollment is completed.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES

A far-reaching mandatory project such as DEERS requires a comprehensive information program within each Uniformed Service to stimulate participation and acceptance by those beneficiaries from whom action is required to implement the program. To be effective, the DEERS information program must be conducted on two levels--one aimed at providing general DEERS information to the Uniformed Service audience (including retirees, all dependents, and all survivor beneficiaries), and a second, more focused effort aimed at the geographic area undergoing intensified enrollment in DEERS. Strong support at the local command level is essential.

1. Lead Service Information Coordinator

a. Based on the population density representation for each Uniformed Service, the DEERS Program Office has designated a Lead Service for each phase of DEERS intensified enrollment. Lead Service information responsibilities are the following:

<u>PHASE</u>	<u>LEAD SERVICE</u>
I	Navy
II	Air Force
III	Army/Marine Corps
Keesler (DEERS/TRIMIS Project)	Air Force
IV	Navy
V	Army
VI	Air Force
VII	Navy

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VIII	Army
IX	Navy/Air Force
x	Air Force
XI	Air Force
XII	OSD

b. The Lead Service information coordinator shall coordinate DEERS information activities with designated Lead Service liaison officers from the other functional areas (such as personnel, medical, and communications) and with the PAOS from other Uniformed Services facilities within the implementation phase. The Lead Service information coordinator shall coordinate geographic responsibilities for local information releases. Coordination is required to ensure single-voice (all Uniformed Services) information releases and to avoid duplication in information dissemination efforts.

## 2. Local Installation PAOS

At the local installation level, the designated PAO for DEERS is responsible for conducting an aggressive campaign to inform all applicable audiences about DEERS benefits and requirements. The PAO must coordinate with the Lead Service information coordinator and with the DEERS liaison officers from the other functional areas on the installation. PAOS shall ensure that the DEERS program coverage is timely, accurate, and comprehensive. Maximum use of all available media should be made to reach target audiences. The traditional internal information media must be supplemented by chain-of-command communication such as command briefings, daily bulletin and plan of day entries, dependent and ombudsmen briefings, correspondence from personnel offices, career and retiree counseling, and in-bound and out-bound briefings for new arrivals and personnel departing a command.

## 3. Joint-Usage Material

Materials for joint-Service use, such as posters, brochures, and general news releases, shall be developed by the DEERS Program Office in coordination with the American Forces Information Service, a division of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). Local PAOS are encouraged to develop and use in-house resources in support of DEERS activities, but must keep within currently authorized budget limits. Section D. of this chapter further describes joint-usage materials.

## C. TARGET AUDIENCES OF THE DEERS INFORMATION PROGRAM

### 1. Active Duty Personnel and Their Dependents

Particular attention is required to inform dependents whose sponsors are deployed or not living with them and, vice versa, to ensure that sponsors on unaccompanied tours are informed of the necessity of having their dependents enrolled in the area in which the dependents reside.

## 2. Retired Personnel, Their Dependents, and Survivors

a. Enrollment packets are mailed by the DSO to retirees entitled to retirement pay and to survivors receiving annuities in the geographic area undergoing DEERS intensified enrollment. (See section E in Chapter 3.) Application forms (DD Forms 1172) contained in these packets may be filled in and returned with appropriate documentation to accomplish dependent enrollment through the mail. Mailing addresses are obtained primarily from finance files. In cases where an annuity goes directly to a bank and no correspondence address is available, the DEERS packet may also go to the bank. If the correspondence address on file is not current, the packet is usually returned to the DEERS Support Office "undelivered."

b. Survivors not receiving annuities do not receive packets. They must enroll themselves and their dependents in DEERS. Often the only way to reach this population is through an external media campaign.

c. Experience has shown that localized information providing specific directions on what is required to enroll is needed to enable retirees and survivors to take appropriate action. Such information as telephone numbers, building numbers, and dates of enrollment in a given area are all required elements of the information program.

## 3. Other Personnel

a. This category includes Medal of Honor winners, 100 percent disabled veterans, foreign military sponsors, eligible civilians, Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) student s/cadet s/midshipmen, National Guard and reserve personnel and their dependents, and any other eligibles. In the case of ROTC and National Guard/reserve personnel, the aim is to advise them of the program and when they would become eligible beneficiaries. Inactive duty National Guardsmen and reservists normally do not become eligible for enrollment until the sponsor reaches age 60 and is drawing retirement pay. At that time, the sponsor would be enrolled automatically, but would be required to enroll his or her dependents. ROTC personnel shall be enrolled in DEERS upon reporting for active duty and then shall be required to enroll any eligible dependents.

b. Utilization of external media is necessary to reach a small percentage of DoD beneficiaries who are out of the mainstream of internal information channels. This is often the only way to advise them that they must take specific actions in order to become enrolled to ensure their continued eligibility for Uniformed Service benefits.

(1) When a large "retired Service" population lives in the vicinity of a Uniformed Service installation, the civilian media may be receptive to publishing stories on DEERS and including specific information on what is required of retirees and surviving spouses and dependents.

(2) When members of the "other" category of beneficiaries are known or thought to be living in the civilian community, but in relatively small numbers, a general information news release on DEERS may be appropriate. The news release would indicate that beneficiaries should contact the nearest Uniformed Service Installation for further information.

(3) The "hard to find" beneficiaries may also be reached through the periodic contact they may have with Uniformed Service installations. Posters and brochures strategically placed in commissaries, exchanges, check-cashing outlets, MTFs and DTFs (such as out-patient waiting rooms, pharmacies, record offices, and health benefits advisors' offices) should be of assistance in reaching these beneficiaries.

#### D. JOINT-USAGE MATERIAL

General promotional material for DEERS shall be developed at the DoD level to ensure continuity and cost effectiveness.

##### 1. Types of Material

a. Public Affairs Officer's Kit. The Public Affairs Officer's Kit is distributed to the PAO at the phase planning conference along with the "DEERS Program Manual." It contains sample materials for use in conducting a DEERS publicity campaign, including news articles, speech copy, camera-ready art, radio scripts, and other items.

b. Wall Posters. DEERS wall posters measure 11 x 17 inches. Wall posters should be posted approximately 7 to 14 days prior to initial enrollment. Sufficient posters should be ordered in advance to effect wide dissemination of DEERS information, installation-wide, and, when applicable, aboard ship.

c. DEERS Brochure. The DEERS brochure contains general information about the program and how it applies to various members of the Uniformed Service community. It is designed to be used with the countertop brochure dispenser but, when appropriate, may be used without the dispenser. Local information for enrollment such as the DEERS points of contact or telephone numbers should be stamped or printed on these brochures.

d. Countertop Brochure Dispensers. DEERS countertop brochure dispensers measure 11 x 14 inches and contain a "'TAKE ONE" pocket for brochures. It is essential that the countertop dispenser pockets be maintained with a supply of the brochures. The brochure dispensers shall be located at strategic points around the installation—that is, at commissary and exchange check-cashing counters, hospital and clinic waiting rooms, medical and dental records desks, health benefits advisors' offices, base theaters, and housing and Personnel offices. Significantly fewer countertop brochure dispensers, than DEERS wall posters, should be ordered.

##### 2. Ordering Materials

a. Local experience, initiative, and the number of bulletin boards and display points at a given installation or aboard a given ship should be considered when determining the number of wall posters to order.

b. The number of countertop brochure dispensers ordered shall reflect high traffic points around the installation or aboard ship. It is estimated that a major base or installation will be able to use effectively (and stock brochures for) about 20 countertop dispensers. It is intended that the brochure be read by all categories of beneficiary audiences, including active duty sponsors. Even though the latter's enrollment is automatic, the brochure will help explain to them--and others-- just what DEERS is and what action is required of them to ensure that their eligible dependents are enrolled.

c. As a general rule, local commands should order brochures in the following quantity:

(1) Active duty population	XXXX
(2) Dependent population	XXXX
(3) Retiree population in area (est.)	XXXX
(4) Dependents of retirees in area (est.)	XXXX
(5) Drilling reservists in area	XXXX
(6) ROTC students in area	<u>XXXX</u>

TOTAL divided by 2.5

d. Local requirements for DEERS posters and brochures shall be coordinated with the Uniformed Services' DEERS information officers in Washington, D.C. (see section G. on page 6-9), approximately 75 days prior to Enrollment Day (E-Day--the day intensified enrollment begins).

#### E. THE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

1. The key to success of DEERS is enrolling as many eligible beneficiaries (of every category) as early as possible during the initial enrollment period in a given area. At the local and regional level, promotion of E-Day is one of the principal ingredients of the information campaign. Successful innovative techniques employed at one locale or command should be promulgated for use or consideration at other enrollment sites.

2. Outlined on the next page is a suggested sequence of actions in support of a regional or local enrollment campaign. It should be noted that DEERS enrollment shall take place in designated regions, which may include several states and, in most cases, more than one Uniformed Service. The enrollment phase may be underway at three or four major military installations and at a variety of smaller stations or bases simultaneously.

a. Suggested Schedule for DEERS Information Campaign

<u>Timing</u>	<u>Action</u>
(1) E-115	(E-Day minus 115 days) Uniformed Service project officers contact installation PAOS with DEERS workshop dates and specify attendance. PAOS are tasked with determining the numbers of posters, brochures, and brochure dispensers needed for their respective installations, and the project officer's mailing address. This information is due at the workshop. In addition, the Lead Service information coordinator is designated and briefed by the Lead Service information project officer.
(2) E-75	DEERS Implementation Training Workshop. The Lead Service information project officer and the information coordinator help conduct the information committee meeting. Tasks are designated, as appropriate. Information on brochure and poster needs is given to the DoD representative.
(3) E-45	Regional information meeting. Information plans should be completed. Dialogue with local DEERS project officer is vital.
(4) E-44	Base newspaper releases begin. Initial news releases should emphasize the documentation needed and urge sponsors to obtain replacements for lost or misplaced documents. PAOs coordinate with local personnel project officers to contact local Uniformed Service clubs and organizations to schedule DEERS presentations.
(5) E-7 thru E-1	PAOS meet with local television news directors, brief them on DEERS fact sheet information (see Public Affairs Officer's Kit); and arrange date and time of base visit of camera crew. PAOS proceed with brochure and poster distribution on base.
(6) E-Day	With the exception of base newspaper articles, media effort shall begin no sooner than E-Day. (See following page for detailed discussion on media usage. )
(7) E+30	Evaluation of local information plans. Follow-up releases, as necessary. Brochure distribution points restocked.
(8) D-30	(Eligibility Checking Day--D-Day-minus 30 days) Contact medical project officer for facts on eligibility checking. Determine medical information needs. Supply hospitals and clinics with material such as brochures, posters, and fliers.

- (9) D-7            Promotional efforts emphasize eligibility checking phase.
- (10) D-Day        Extensive information media coverage.
- (11) D+14        Followup reports on both enrollment and eligibility checking.
- (12) D+45        Appropriate periodic updates related to DEERS plus enrollment, eligibility checking, and maintenance.

b. Timing, Frequency, and Importance of Coverage

(1) Base Newspapers. Articles begin 2 weeks prior to E-Day and continue beyond the initial eligibility-checking phase. Weekly coverage lasts for 6 weeks. Articles shall be published on an "as needed"\* basis after the initial 6-week period. (Sample articles are included in the Public Affairs Officer's Kit.)

(a) Base newspapers shall inform both active duty and retiree populations. Include list of documents needed for verification of eligibility.

(b) One liners (such as "'Have you enrolled your dependents in DEERS?") and DEERS logo and slogans shall be placed throughout the paper, in addition to feature articles; they offer necessary reinforcement. (DEERS camera-ready logos and slogans are included in the Public Affairs Officer's Kit.)

(c) After the 1st month of informative articles, a question and answer column, pictures of enrollment and eligibility checking, and cartoons. may be used in revitalizing the information effort.

(d) Name and telephone number of the local DEERS contact should be prominent in all releases.

(2) Brochures and Posters. Initial distribution shall be completed prior to E-Day. Monitor and refill brochure distribution points monthly or more frequently if necessary. (Sample brochure is included in the Public Affairs Officer's Kit.)

(a) Brochures and posters provide informational reinforcement.

(b) Brochures and posters, at a bare minimum, should be distributed in the exchange, commissary, service station, personnel office, and MTFs and DTFs.

(c) When possible, name and telephone number of DEERS contact should be displayed on the poster.

(3) DEERS Presentations. Speeches should be given to military units, clubs, and organizations before and following E-Day.

(a) Presentations are important because the audience will be informed, questions will be answered, and a neutral or favorable attitude usually will be created.



(b) Fliers with the name and telephone number of the DEERS contact should be distributed during presentations so audience members can have future questions answered by contact.

(4) Uniformed Service and Civilian Radio Broadcasts. Release information 1 week before E-Day to air no sooner than E-Day. Solicit additional coverage when needed. Make follow-up inquiry if DEERS announcements are not heard.

(a) Coverage may be achieved on newscasts, talk shows, and community calendar slots, and through public service announcements.

(b) The importance of announcing the name and telephone number of the DEERS contact in the broadcast should be stated in cover letter to the program or public service director explaining the release.

(5) Uniformed Service and Civilian Television Newscasts. At least one newscast coverage from each local television station is recommended on or after E-Day.

(a) The civilian television newscast provides an effective means of reaching the uninformed retiree/survivor/dependent audience.

(b) Personal visits to news directors, as opposed to phone calls and mailings, are most successful in achieving coverage in areas of implementation.

(c) DEERS fact sheet information (see Public Affairs Officer's Kit) shall be discussed with news directors and camera crews to ensure accuracy of information conveyed.

(d) If practical, the DEERS telephone number should be mentioned in the newscast and shown on the screen. (Be sure to make a final check of the number to ensure accuracy.)

(e) Newscast coverage attracts more attention than public service announcements. The newscast viewer audience is sizeable and is usually receptive to information. Exceptional results have been gained through newscast coverage. However, public service announcements should be used as an additional means of informing.

(6) Civilian Newspapers. Released after E-Day. Seek coverage whenever possible.

(a) Articles may emphasize improvement in health benefits and fraud reduction to achieve placement on or near the front page and in health care sections. Article placement-near the obituary column is also-desirable.

(b) Stress DEERS as Uniformed Service-wide, involving active duty personnel, retirees, survivors, and dependents.

(c) The importance of including the name and telephone number of the DEERS contact in the article should be addressed in a cover letter to the editor explaining the release.

F. MAINTENANCE

1. DEERS is an ongoing program and, as such, will require periodic information support after intensified enrollment is completed and eligibility checking has become routine at installations within the phased-in area.

2. A continuing effort shall be made by all installation PAOS to inform beneficiaries who might not be enrolled. This effort may include presentations to dependents, retirees, and survivor groups, exhibits at open houses and retiree seminars, and articles in the installation paper giving DEERS updates and reminding beneficiaries new to the area that they must be enrolled. Supplies of brochures and posters should be available for continuing use.

3. PAOS shall maintain a close relationship with personnel and medical officers concerned with ongoing DEERS activities at the local level. Regularly scheduled meetings shall be held with representatives from these functional areas.

4. Uniformed Service news bureaus shall provide periodic articles on DEERS that may be used in local installation papers to update the beneficiary population on DEERS.

5. Graphics and exhibit support for presentations and demonstrations may be obtained through contractor maintenance representatives or by contacting the Uniformed Service project officer (see section H., below).

6. Additional publicity materials, such as posters, brochures, and Public Affairs Officer's Kits, may be obtained through Uniformed Service information officers in Washington, D.C. (see section G., below).

G. DEERS INFORMATION OFFICES AND POINTS OF CONTACT AT OSD AND SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Office and Location</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
OSD	DEERS Program Office Room 3E341, The Pentagon Washington, D.C. 20301	(202) 694-4705 AUTOVON 224-4705
Army	HQDA SAPA-PP Washington, D.C. 20310	(202) 697-5081 AUTOVON 227-5081
Navy	NIRA NOP-00740 Washington, D.C. 20350	(202) 695-2356 AUTOVON 225-2356
Marine Corps	HQME Public Affairs, Code PAM Washington, D.C. 20380	(202) 694-1492 AUTOVON 224-1492 ,

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Office and Location</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Air Force	SAF/PAX Washington, D.C. 20330	(202) 697-6703 AUTOVON 227-6703
Coast Guard	USCG HQ PA Office Washington, D.C. 20593	(202) 426-2310 FTS - same AUTOVON - none
Public Health Service	See section H.	
NOAA	See section H.	

H. DEERS OSD AND SERVICE PROJECT OFFICES

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Office and Location</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
OSD	DEERS Program Office Room 3E341, The Pentagon Washington, D.C. 20301	(202) 694-4705 AUTOVON 224-4705
	DEERS Support Office 2100 Garden Road, Suite B-2 Monterey, CA 93940	(408) 646-1010 AUTOVON Via: NPS 878-0111 Fort Ord 929-1110
Army	HQDA DAAG-PS I Alexandria, VA 22331	(202) 325-9591 AUTOVON 221-9591
Navy	OP-01B5 (NMPC-081) Washington, D.C. 20370	(202) 694-3479 AUTOVON 224-43479
Marine Corps	HQMC MSPA-3 Administrative Officer Washington, D.C. 20380	(202) 694-1958 AUTOVON 224-1958
Air Force	USAF AFMPC/MPCDOP Randolph AFB, TX 78150	(512) 652-5985 AUTOVON 487-5985
Coast Guard	Commandant, USCG G-PS-1 Washington, D.C. 20953	(202) 426-0276 FTS - same AUTOVON - none

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<u>Organization</u>	<u>Office and Location</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Public Health Service	Compensation & Benefits Branch Parklawn Building, Rm 4-35 5600 Fishers Lane Rockville, MD 20857	(301) 443-4590 FTS - same AUTOVON - none
NOAA	Commissioned Personnel Division NOAA (NC1) Rockville, MD 20852	(301) 443-8616 FTS - same